

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

Meeting Date: 19 July 2006

Division: Growth Management

Bulk Item: Yes X No

Department: Marine Resources

Staff Contact: George Garrett

AGENDA ITEM WORDING:

Approval of a Resolution requesting the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the Florida Boating Advisory Council oppose the suggested legislation of a requirement to register non-motorized vessels

ITEM BACKGROUND:

On several occasions the Florida Boating Advisory Council has discussed the issue of potentially requiring the registration of non-motorized vessels. Such vessels include kayaks and canoes. In general, it is felt that the impact of such vessels on infrastructure, the need to fund infrastructural improvements, or on law enforcement is minimal. The attached resolution would provide needed input to both the Florida Boating Advisory Council and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission indicating that the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners does not believe that non-motorized vessels should be required to be registered.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOCC ACTION:

None

CONTRACT/AGREEMENT CHANGES:

None

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Approval

TOTAL COST: None

BUDGETED: Yes No

COST TO COUNTY: None

SOURCE OF FUNDS:

REVENUE PRODUCING: Yes No X **AMOUNT Per Month** **Year**

APPROVED BY: County Atty X OMB/Purchasing NA Risk Management NA

DIVISION DIRECTOR APPROVAL: 7/5
Ty Symroski, Director of Growth Management

DOCUMENTATION: Included X Not Required

DISPOSITION:

AGENDA ITEM NO.: I-5

RESOLUTION NO. 2006

A RESOLUTION BY THE MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REQUESTING THE FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION AND THE STATE BOATING ADVISORY COUNCIL TO OPPOSE THE SUGGESTED LEGISLATION OF A REQUIREMENT TO REGISTER NON-MOTORIZED VESSELS.

WHEREAS, the waters of the Florida Keys are enjoyed by numerous manually propelled and wind driven vessel operators; and

WHEREAS, Monroe County recognizes that non-powered vessels provide a passive, low impact, non-invasive, environmentally friendly form of boating; and

WHEREAS, Monroe County is supportive of canoeing and kayaking and has been instrumental in the development of the Florida Keys Overseas Paddling Trail; and

WHEREAS, non-motorized vessels typically require little if any infrastructure, facilities or public funded services; and

WHEREAS, non-motorized vessel owners should not be burdened with unnecessary fees or taxes; and

WHEREAS, the Monroe County Marine and Port Advisory Committee has recommended opposition to the registration of non-motorized vessels.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA THAT:

Section 1. The Board of County Commissioners wishes to convey to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the State Boating Advisory Council, and the Florida Legislature by this Resolution opposition to any proposed legislation requiring registration of non-motorized vessels in the State of Florida.

Section 2. This Resolution is presented to appropriate representatives of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the State Boating Advisory Council, and the County's State legislative representatives.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of County Commissioners, Monroe County, Florida at a regular meeting of said Board held on the 19th day of July, A.D., 2006.

Mayor Charles "Sonny" McCoy	_____
Mayor Pro Tem Dixie Spehar	_____
Commissioner George Neugent	_____
Commissioner David Rice	_____
Commissioner Glenn Patton	_____

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA

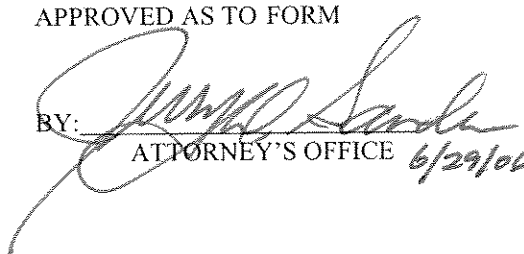
BY: _____
MAYOR/CHAIR PERSON

(SEAL)

ATTEST: DANNY I. KOLHAGE, CLERK

BY: _____
DEPUTY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM

BY:  _____
ATTORNEY'S OFFICE 6/29/06

Information Sheet
for
Non-Motorized Vessel Registration Resolution

Background:

Currently there is no move by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) to seek legislation to register non-motorized vessels. However, FWC has been asked by the Marine Industry Association of Florida (MIAF) to consider legislation for registering non-motorized vessels. Conversations regarding whether non-motorized vessels used on the waters of the State could justify paying into some sort of waterway impact fee has been the subject of discussion for several years. The FWC, preferring to remain neutral on the subject, tasked the State Boating Advisory Council (BAC) in 2005 with reviewing the issues and considering the efficacy of registration of non-motorized vessels.

The BAC discussed the issue at its November 2005 meeting in Key Largo, and due to much debate created a sub-committee to further review the issue. That sub-committee met twice this year and members have been presented with information both for and against the registration proposal. Much of the discussion had been based on funding additional enforcement. Col. Julie Jones, Director of the FWC Division of Law Enforcement and chair of the BAC, instructed the sub-committee to look at the needs of non-motorized vessel operators (i.e. resources and services) rather than whether or not funds generated by that user group could be utilized to provide additional enforcement. Regarding what types of non-motorized vessels should be considered for registration, the sub-committee did determine that water toys (surfboards, inner tubes, etc.) should not be included in any registration considerations. The sub-committee is also considering alternatives to registration such as one time tax, so as to minimize administrative costs, feasibility issues (affixing a sticker), etc.

At the April 2006 BAC sub-committee meeting in Tallahassee numerous citizens (many representing kayak and canoeing interests) indicated that paddlers neither want nor need any infrastructure (i.e. ramps, markers, etc.) and that a registration fee would create an undue burden on a user group that creates little to no impact on the environment or staff resources unlike motorized vessels (i.e. seagrass scarring, manatee deaths, high speed collisions, etc.). In addition, FWC and members of the sub-committee have received close to a hundred letters, phone calls and other communications from around the state strongly opposed to the consideration of registration (only one or two have been in support). The sub-committee will meet again 15 September 2006 in St. Pete and may make a final decision with a recommendation to the BAC. The sub-committee has heard very little support for the registration concept. This issue was also in the local newspapers in the Keys in the last several months. Articles and corresponding comments from the community have indicated overwhelming opposition to registration.

Data Presented to the Non-Motorized Vessel Registration Sub-committee

Because the consideration of registration is only conceptual, it is impossible to anticipate the amount of revenue that could be generated. The dollars generated would of course be dependent upon the actual fees collected minus administrative costs. These details would be developed by FWC and/or the Florida Legislature at some point in the future. The Florida Bureau of Titles and Registration acknowledges that administrative costs are a much higher percentage of the fees assessed when those fees are smaller (which would be the case for small non-motorized vessels). Most states currently do not require paddle craft or small sailboats to be registered, in part due to high administration costs and an ineffective ability to return services to the public.

Arguments for registration:

- It can generate some additional funds to be utilized for boating infrastructure
- A matter of fairness
- Ability to trace a vessel if stolen (also requires titling)

Arguments against registration:

- Non-motorized vessel owners typically do not use boating infrastructure
- Non-motorized vessels create no environmental damage or use fossil fuels
- Not practical to affix a decal to many non-motorized vessels
- Administrative costs outweigh revenue benefit
- Overwhelming opposition by citizens around the state
- Non-motorized vessels are involved in very few boating accidents
- Titling those vessels would create an additional administrative nightmare
- Cost of affixing numbers to the vessel may be greater than the revenue generated
- Registration would affect the affordability of owning paddle craft, etc.
- Registration would burden what is now an important nature-based tourist sector
- Registration may encourage the use of motors on currently non-motorized vessels
- Non-motorized, low impact vessel use should be encouraged